

Meadows Elementary is successful today largely because of the dedication of its parents and teachers. Every day teachers begin the school day before any other school in the district so that they can, have time to share ideas and train one another. Parents provide additional support in whatever form that they can, be it at home or school. One weekend several parents and teachers volunteered their time to help wire the school so that every classroom could have internet access. It is that extra effort to strive for scholastic achievement which has made Meadows a Blue Ribbon School.

I join the parents, teachers, staff, and students of Meadows Elementary and the city of Thousand Oaks in recognizing Meadows Elementary for its contributions toward teaching and the development of future leaders for our Nation. As a Blue Ribbon School, Meadows Elementary stands as an example for other schools in our community and our Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CASS BALLENGER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall votes 137 and 138 on May 16, 1997, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 137, an amendment to separate the Summer Youth Employment Program from the Disadvantaged Youth Block Grant Program included in the bill. I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 138, a vote on final passage of the Employment, Training, and Literacy Enhancement Act of 1997. As a cosponsor of this legislation, I support this program consolidation measure.

IN MEMORY OF BRIDGET
SWEENEY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Bridget Sweeney, an active citizen and participant in the political process, wife and mother.

Bridget was born in Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, Ireland. She came to the United States after graduating from high school in 1930. She worked as a domestic servant during the Depression. Later, she worked as a customer service representative for the Cleveland Division of Water.

Bridget was active in Cleveland's civic life. She made countless telephone calls, handed out reams of leaflets, and spoke with scores of her peers to promote a better community.

She raised three children and worked to elect her son, State Senator Patrick Sweeney of Cleveland.

She also volunteered with her church, St. Ignatius. She was a member of the Altar and Rosary Society, as well as the St. Ignatius Citizens Group.

Bridget leaves behind eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. We will all miss her.

THE PRESIDENT'S GRADUATION
REMARKS AT WEST POINT

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the honor and privilege of welcoming the President of the United States to the graduation ceremony at our Nation's military academy at West Point, NY, just outside of my congressional district.

The President's graduation remarks to the 896 graduates of the West Point class of 1997 was an inspirational and encouraging clarion call to our Nation's military leaders of tomorrow.

Many of us especially welcomed the President's underscoring the importance of NATO expansion, an issue which I have championed for many years because it will help ensure not only our Nation's own security, but also that of our allies and those nations struggling to achieve democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to insert the President's remarks in full at this point in the RECORD:

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT THE U.S.
MILITARY ACADEMY COMMENCEMENT

The President: Thank you very much. Please be seated, relax. Thank you, General Christman, for those kind introductory remarks and for your truly extraordinary service to your nation throughout your military career. Here at West Point, and before, when we had more opportunities to work together on a daily basis, I have constantly admired your dedication and your ability.

General Reimer, Secretary West, Senator Reed, Chairman Gilman, Congressman Shimkus, Congresswoman Kelly, Congressman Sessions, former Congressman Bilbray, parents and families and friends of the cadets, and especially, to the Class of 1997, I extend my heartfelt congratulations.

This has been a truly remarkable class. As General Christman said, you wrote an unparalleled record of academic achievement in the classroom. I congratulate you all, and particularly your number one honor graduate and valedictorian, Adam Ake. Congratulations to all of you on your accomplishments. (Applause.)

Now, General Christman also outlined the extraordinary accomplishments of your athletic teams, and he mentioned that I had the privilege of seeing Army win its first 10-win season in football and reclaim the Commander in Chiefs Trophy in Philadelphia. And he thanked me for that. But, actually, as a lifelong football fan, I deserve no thanks. It was a terrific game, and I'm quite sure it was the first time in the field of any endeavor of conflict where the Army defeated the navy not on land, but on water. (Laughter and applause.)

I know that in spite of all of your achievements as a class and in teams, a few of you also upheld West Point's enduring tradition of independence. It began in 1796 when President Adams' War Department ordered the first classes in fortification. And the troops here thought they already knew all about that, so they burned the classroom to the ground, postponing the start of instruction by five years. (Laughter.)

Today, I am reliably informed that though your spirits are equally high, your infractions are more modest. Therefore, I hereby exercise my prerogative to grant amnesty for minor offenses to the Corps of Cadets.

(Applause.) The cheering was a little disconcerting—now, the operative word there was "minor." (Laughter.)

Men and women of the Class of '97, today you join the Long Gray Line, the Long Gray Line that stretches across two centuries of unstinting devotion to America and the freedom that is our greatest treasure. From the defense of Fort Erie in the War of 1812 to the fury of Antietam, from the trenches of Argonne to the Anzio in Okinawa, to Heartbreak Ridge, the Mekong Delta, the fiery desert of the Gulf War, the officers of West Point have served and sacrificed for our nation.

In just the four years since I last spoke here, your graduates have helped to restore democracy to Haiti, to save hundreds of thousands of lives from genocide and famine in Rwanda, to end the bloodshed in Bosnia. Throughout our history, whenever duty called, the men and women of West Point have never failed us. And I speak for all Americans when I say, I know you never will.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to West Point and a special word of congratulations to the students in this class from other countries. We welcome you here; we are proud to have you as a part of our military service tradition. And we wish you well as you go back home. We hope you, too, can advance freedom's cause, for in the 21st century that is something we must do together.

Two days ago I returned from Europe on a mission to look back to one of the proudest chapters in America's history and to look forward to the history we all will seek to shape for our children and grandchildren. This week is the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, what Winston Churchill described as the most unselfish act in all history.

In 1947, Americans, exhausted by war and anxious to get on with their lives at home, were summoned to embrace another leadership role by a generation of remarkable leaders—General George Marshall, Senator Arthur Vandenberg, President Harry Truman—leaders who knew there could be no lasting peace and security for an America that withdrew behind its borders and withdrew from the world and its responsibilities. They provided the indispensable leadership to create the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the first global financial institutions. They, in effect, organized America and our allies to meet the challenges of their time—to build unparalleled prosperity, to stand firm against Soviet expansionism until the light of freedom shone all across Europe.

The second purpose of my journey was inextricably tied to the first. It was to look to the future, to the possibility of achieving what Marshall's generation could only dream of—a democratic, peaceful and undivided Europe for the first time in all of history; and to the necessity of America and its allies once again organizing ourselves to meet the challenges of our time, to secure peace and prosperity for the next 50 years and beyond.

To build and secure a new Europe, peaceful, democratic and undivided at last, there must be a new NATO, with new missions, new members and new partners. We have been building that kind of NATO for the last three years with new partners in the Partnership for Peace and NATO's first out-of-area mission in Bosnia. In Paris last week, we took another giant stride forward when Russia entered a new partnership with NATO, choosing cooperation over confrontation, as both sides affirmed that the world is different now. European security is no longer a zero-sum contest between Russia and NATO; but a cherished, common goal.

In a little more than a month, I will join with other NATO leaders in Madrid to invite